United Nations A/67/PV.65

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

65th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 February 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Román-Morey (Peru), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/67/693/Add.2, A/67/693/Add.3, A/67/693/Add.4 and A/67/693/Add.5)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/67/693/Add.2 to Add.5, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/67/693/Add.1, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Grenada and Kyrgyzstan have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/67/L.55)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 14, jointly with agenda item 9, "Report of the Economic and Social Council", at its 28th plenary meeting, on 22 October 2012.

Members will also recall that, under agenda item 14, the Assembly adopted resolution 67/18 at its 43rd plenary meeting, on 28 November 2012, and marked the global launch of the International Year of Quinoa at its 64th plenary meeting on 20 February 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.55.

Ms. Muli (Kenya): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.55, entitled "Organization of the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014".

Twenty years ago, representatives of Member States, civil society, academics and the private sector gathered together in Cairo and adopted the most forward-looking document in the world at that time. It trail-blazed and set the stage for other international conferences, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which built upon its success. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development is as relevant today as it was then.

Two years ago, my delegation was honoured and proud to have facilitated resolution 65/234, which extended the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its key actions beyond 2014. As members may recall,

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the resolution was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. We are similarly honoured and proud to have facilitated the current organizational draft resolution, which sets out the modalities for the holding of the special session.

My delegation wants to sincerely thank all the delegations that participated in the consultations on the present draft resolution. I thank them for their hard work and the flexibility they demonstrated. We appreciate the long hours that it took to arrive at this consensus text. While it is not a perfect document for any specific delegation, it reflects the various compromise positions that were expressed by different delegations.

This organizational draft resolution has several strong points. First, the high-level special session will be held on 22 September 2014. That is about the time that the high-level segment of the general debate will be held. If it were held at another time, it would have burdened delegations by requiring them to return to New York to attend the special session.

Secondly, Member States will have the opportunity to recommit themselves to the ICPD Programme of Action and its key actions at the highest level, just as was done in Cairo 19 years ago.

Thirdly, there will also be wider participation by Member States. The high-level special session will be held over a period of eight hours. With the extended time period, more delegations will have the opportunity to participate.

Fourthly, there will be participation by civil society. The participation of non-governmental organizations will be based on the principle of equitable geographical representation, thereby giving each geographical region an equal chance to be represented at the special session.

The Commission for Population and Development has also been given a special place in the preparations leading up to the special session. Although there will be no outcome during the high-level special session, the Commission's forty-seventh session, in 2014, will be open-ended, giving an opportunity to all Member States to participate on an equal footing in the envisaged interactive discussion and preparations for the special session.

Finally, I would like to most profoundly thank the secretariat of the consultations, whose staff was drawn from United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Population Division. They worked tirelessly to provide answers and explanations to delegations. They also provided clarifications on the various proposals and ensured the timely distribution of the draft texts and other documents. That work would have been much more difficult without them. I look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/67/L.55.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/67/L.55, entitled "Organization of the Special Session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014", I wish to put on the record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In paragraphs 1 and 4 (a) of draft resolution A/67/L.55, the General Assembly would decide that the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development will be held on 22 September 2014 in New York, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, and that the special session will be composed of plenary meetings on 22 September 2014 from 1 to 9 p.m.

The special session of the General Assembly would be composed of one day and three meetings in all six languages, with all three meetings being proposed for the afternoon of 22 September 2014, from 1 to 9 p.m. Therefore, the special session will constitute an addition of three meetings, with interpretation and verbatim records in all six languages, to the workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. That would constitute an additional requirement in the amount of $144,200 for meetings in 2014. Furthermore, additional documentation would be required, comprising 121 pages of pre-session documentation in all six official languages in 2014. That would constitute an additional requirement in the amount of $236,600 for documentation services in 2014.

Consequently, additional requirements of $380,800 for the biennium 2014-2015 would arise under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council

affairs and conference management", for meeting servicing and documentation. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/67/L.55, additional resources in the amount of $380,800 would be required under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management". That would require additional appropriations of $380,800 to be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Nemroff (United States of America): The United States would first like to thank the Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya, Ambassador Koki Muli, for her remarks this morning. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Kenya, Ambassador Macharia Kamau, and the very capable Mr. John Mosoti for their tireless efforts in facilitating the discussions of the modalities of the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014.

The United States is pleased to join the consensus on draft resolution A/67/L.55. We strongly support the special session of the General Assembly, which will assess progress to date on meeting the goals outlined in the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The ICPD, along with its five- and 10-year reviews and in many resolutions since 1994, provides the foundation for our global efforts to provide women and young people with access to sexual and reproductive health services, including modern forms of contraception. The ICPD mandate is based on support for reproductive rights, which are essential to empowering women and ultimately to the international community's ability to reach our global development goals.

Throughout negotiations on the present draft resolution, we have underscored the important role that non-governmental and civil society organizations, including those that do not have consultative status in the Economic and Social Council, should play through their participation in the special session. The special session should be open to all concerned parties, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have subject-matter expertise.

Non-governmental and civil society organizations, academic institutions and private-sector organizations worldwide play a crucial role in population issues, including by advocating on behalf of women's reproductive rights and by implementing programmes to assist women. Such programmes include reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and enhancing the ability of women to make decisions for themselves about when and if to have children. Their expertise is essential to the success of the special session.

The process of admission for civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to participate in the special session must be completely transparent. Any concerns with an NGO's potential participation in the special session need to be addressed openly and transparently, not behind closed doors. Non-governmental organizations must not be denied access to United Nations forums for political reasons.

In that regard, we understand paragraph 4 (d) and footnote 2 of the draft resolution to mean that the list of NGOs and other potential participants will be sent to the General Assembly for its consideration, where Member States will evaluate any possible objections made by other States. The special session will have a far greater value if all relevant concerned civil society voices are heard without objection.

Each event and conference is a little different, so the language in the draft resolution concerning civil society participation should not be seen as a cookie-cutter precedent for the next resolution. We should continue our efforts to develop and refine clear and transparent procedures to facilitate the full participation of NGOs in high-level meetings. As we gain experience with various formulas, we expect to refine and develop the future language on that topic to provide for civil society access more clearly.

The United States looks forward to continued cooperation to make the special session a forward-looking and productive session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.55.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, Panama has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/67/L.55.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.55?

Draft resolution A/67/L.55 was adopted (resolution 67/250).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. De Léon Huerta (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico attaches great importance to resolution 67/250, as it concerns a topic that is relevant to the international community, namely, the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. We are certain that the special session of the General Assembly will enable States to reaffirm at the highest political level their commitment to implementing and launching the Cairo Programme of Action.

One of the fundamental issues in organizing special sessions of the General Assembly is that of the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations. They have played a critical role in promoting the goals of the Cairo Programme of Action.

The delegation of Mexico once again wishes to reiterate its commitment to the broadest possible participation of civil society representatives as essential stakeholders in our deliberations. For that reason, we regret the introduction, in paragraph 4 (d) of the resolution, of the view seeking to limit the participation of such organizations, submitting it solely to the principle of non-objection by Member States without, at the same time, respecting the crucial principle of due process. Moreover, the supposed right of veto by States regarding the participation of certain organizations is professed to be acknowledged, ignoring the fact that it is for the General Assembly to make such a decision.

During the informal consultations, we stated our preference for the special session not to be held on the same date as the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples in 2014 in order to avoid possible logistical complications. We hope, however, that the agreement reached for the first plenary meeting of the session to begin at the conclusion of the opening of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples will enable both events, to which we attach the highest priority, to take place in a coordinated way.

Finally, we would like to thank the delegation of Kenya for the very efficient way in which it led the negotiations on the resolution and the United Nations Population Fund for its work in the context of marking the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is committed to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014. We attach particular importance to next year's special session of the General Assembly to review the status of the implementation of the ICPD.

We welcome the consensus adoption of resolution 67/250 with regard to that session. We note the work of the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations in helping to coordinate the process for reaching agreement on the resolution.

By adopting the resolution, it is clearly established that the proceedings of the special session shall be governed by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. We believe that the participation and activities of representatives of non-governmental organizations, as set out in paragraphs 4 (c) and (d) of the resolution, will take place without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The President of the General Assembly drawing up the list of representatives of non-governmental organizations will be undertaken in accordance with the principle of non-objection.

In general, we support the inclusion of non-governmental organizations in the work of the United Nations in the social and economic fields. The Russian delegation believes that that should take place without prejudice to the intergovernmental nature of the Organization and its principal bodies.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, was a groundbreaking event in the history of population and development, as well as of women's rights. The ICPD Programme of Action endorsed a new strategy that emphasized the many linkages between population and development and focused on the needs of individual women and men. It has had a profound impact on people around the world in both developed and developing countries.

Israel attaches great importance to the ICPD and therefore joined the consensus on resolution 67/250. However, I would like to express my delegation's disappointment that during the informal consultations some States insisted on limiting civil society participation at the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.

Israel strongly believes that the special session should be a platform for all relevant stakeholders to express their views and exchange best practices. Non-governmental organizations operate on the ground in all corners of the world and are crucial players in the promotion and implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

Israel appreciates the engagement and leadership of the facilitator, Ambassador Kamau of Kenya, as well as the tremendous efforts made by our colleague, John Mosoti, and the rest of the team. We would like to thank the facilitator for his constructiveness and creativity, especially with regard to paragraph 4 (d) of the resolution on civil society participation.

However, we are deeply concerned that the participation of civil society and other important stakeholders will be considered on a non-objection basis, contravening the basic principles of due process, fairness, transparency and accountability. As we emphasized throughout the negotiation process, the final decision of civil society participation rests with the General Assembly, and that is how we interpret paragraph 4 (d).

We call on all Member States to respect the important role of all stakeholders, and we sincerely hope that everyone who is interested and engaged in the topic of population and development will be able to join us in September 2014.

Ms. Hentic (Canada): Let me take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Koki Muli, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya, for her very constructive opening remarks.

Canada supports the important work of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and is pleased that we could reach consensus on the resolution. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Kenya for the remarkable facilitation role it played during the negotiation process. As I participated personally in those long negotiations, allow me to warmly thank Ambassador Kamau and my dear colleague John Mosoti for their relentless efforts to get to a consensus text of resolution 67/250.

Canada is disappointed that the General Assembly has been slowly moving away from its past practice in regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in United Nations events, such as the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014. While Canada agrees that Member States be consulted in the selection process for NGOs without consultative status in the Economic and Social Council, Canada also believes that NGOs should participate in United Nations events on the basis of their relevance to the subject matter under consideration at the event.

The language in paragraph 4 (d) of resolution 67/250 is still based on an objection. Past practice allowed for Member States' involvement in the election process, while also ensuring that NGOs' relevance was the primary criterion for their prospective participation. As Canada believes that this balance is critical, we regret that such balance is not adequately reflected in the resolution before us.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 67/250.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Devanlay (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and

Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Agreement country Norway, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to extend our thanks and deep appreciation to Ambassador Kamau and to our dear colleague John Mosoti from the Mission of Kenya to the United Nations, who personally made tireless efforts to facilitate the discussions on resolution 67/250, and for their outstanding work in conducting the process of consultations in a very open and transparent manner.

First, the European Union and its member States want to unambiguously reaffirm their commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its review conferences. We wish to stress the importance we attach to the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up of the ICPD beyond 2014.

The ICPD review process is a unique way of deepening our appreciation of the importance of the ICPD agenda. The ICPD in Cairo in 1994 was a ground-breaking event; placing human rights, individuals and communities at the centre of population and development issues represented a paradigm shift in development policy. The special session of the General Assembly, now scheduled for the afternoon of 22 September 2014, will also come at a key moment of our discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

We are also looking forward to fruitful discussions during the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development in April 2014, which will be open-ended in order to ensure maximum engagement and ownership of all stakeholders ahead of the special session.

However, when discussing this resolution's modalities, we were deeply disappointed by the reluctance shown by some Member States to ensure the full participation of civil society representatives at the special session and to provide transparency in the way that relevant non-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would be allowed to participate in the session.

We firmly believe that maintaining a strong and open dialogue with genuine and relevant civil society groups should be a key element in the high-level discussion of the ICPD. For that reason, throughout the consultations on the resolution we consistently advocated, as we have in other instances, that the process of admission of NGOs to participate in the special session should be completely transparent and should allow for the full involvement of the General Assembly. Therefore, our interpretation of paragraph 4 (d) of resolution 67/250 is that, within the General Assembly, Member States will be able to examine and challenge possible objections made by other States to the presence of civil society representatives or specific NGOs in an open and transparent fashion.

We hope that a more constructive approach will be shown by all Member States in future discussions on civil society participation at the United Nations, and the European Union and its member States will remain strongly committed in ensuring an improved, more open and more transparent process for the selection of NGO participation in specific United Nations meetings. We will continue to stay actively engaged in debates on population and development and look forward to successful and fully inclusive discussions during the special session.

Mr. Fuchs (Switzerland): Switzerland would like to commend the facilitators, Ambassador Kamau and Mr. John Mosoti from the Mission of Kenya to the United Nations, for their unwavering efforts in providing guidance in the consultations on resolution 67/250 and leading it to a sound consensus.

Switzerland welcomes the purpose of the resolution, and we reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and of the ongoing review process, including its review conferences. The special session to be held on 22 September 2014 will give key momentum to renewing political will to promote the fundamental principles on population and development agreed to by Governments at the International Conference in Cairo in 1994. We further welcome the fact that the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development in April 2014 will be open-ended in order to ensure maximum inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders.

With regard to inclusive stakeholder participation at the special session itself, however, we are concerned about the reluctance to fully support the principles of transparency and due process in the selection of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) without

accreditation in the Economic and Social Council and the wider civil society. In Switzerland's view, civil society stakeholders contribute valuable perspectives on matters relating to population and development and should therefore be accorded a strong and appropriate role in the ICPD special session of 2014.

Throughout the consultation process on the modality resolution, Switzerland advocated a transparent and open process in the selection of relevant NGOs and civil society — a process that accords a role in the consultation of the list proposed by the President of the General Assembly, not only to the individual Member States but to the General Assembly itself, to take a role in the decision-making process.

We acknowledge that, with the formulation attained in the resolution, a step in the right direction towards transparency and due process — values that are dear to Switzerland — has been taken. In that sense, Switzerland understands the meaning of the language in paragraph 4 (d) as follows. After the consultation of Member States on the proposed NGOs in civil society stakeholders, the General Assembly will have the possibility to consider the list of relevant stakeholders and possible objections made by Member States. We understand that the General Assembly is the legitimate body to take the final decision on the participation of relevant stakeholders in the ICPD special session.

Switzerland will maintain its commitment to supporting the important role we attach to NGOs and the wider civil society in general and on this particular matter. Switzerland will therefore continue to engage in dialogue with Member States in developing appropriate standards in that regard.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Agenda item 110 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(c) Election of five members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 (a) to (e) of resolution 60/180, of 20 December 2005, the Organizational Committee shall comprise seven members of the Security Council, including five permanent members; seven members of the Economic and Social Council, elected from regional groups; five top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peacebuilding fund; five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions; and seven additional members elected by the General Assembly, giving due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Committee.

Members will recall that, at its 62nd plenary meeting, on 24 December 2012, the General Assembly elected Brazil, Malaysia and Peru as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2013. Regarding candidatures for the two seats, I should like to inform members that the Group of African States has endorsed Kenya and South Africa.

Members will recall that in resolution 60/261, the General Assembly decided that the rules of procedure and established practice of the Assembly for the election of members of its subsidiary bodies shall apply to its election of members of the Committee. For this election, rules 92 and 94 shall be applicable. Accordingly, the election will be held by secret ballot and there will be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election. In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect Kenya and South Africa as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2013?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate Kenya and South Africa on their election

as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/67/107)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that, at its 62nd plenary meeting, on 24 December 2012, the General Assembly took note of the President's appointment of Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2013 and ending on 31 December 2015. Members will also recall that there remains one seat to be filled from among the Asia-Pacific States, two seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States, and one seat to be filled from among the Western European and other States for a period of three years, beginning 1 January 2013.

Members will also recall that, at the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly, one seat from among the Asia-Pacific States and one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States remained to be filled. On the recommendation of the Chair of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States and the Western European and other States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Israel have been appointed members of the Committee on Conferences for the period beginning on 21 February 2013 and ending on 31 December 2015; and Sri Lanka has been appointed for the period beginning on 21 February 2013 and ending on 31 December 2014.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States remains vacant for a period beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2015.

Members will further recall that one seat, also from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, has remained vacant since the sixty-sixth session, for a period beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2014. I urge that regional group to submit its candidature as soon as possible.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 111.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.